



## *AOT in Action*

### **TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!**

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

#### **A Message from the Director:**

Good morning.

Last week, the Travel Industry Association held its 2008 Marketing Outlook Forum in Portland, Oregon. This annual event is the premier national conference for the travel industry's research and marketing professionals. More than 70 industry leaders presented the latest information on trends in sustainability, economic forecasts and new marketing opportunities, with the biggest concern being the economy.

Although the current state of the economy presents major challenges to our industry for the coming year, there are a few "bright spots" our industry can focus its efforts on to promote travel at local, national, and international levels. Initiatives such as adding seven countries to the Visa Waiver Program and the possible passing of the Travel Promotion Act are effective programs that will positively impact the health of the travel industry.

Now more than ever, we must continue to send the message that tourism is a revenue-generating sector in these tough economic times.

For highlights about the forum, please read the *Industry News* section below or visit [www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org).

Have a great week.

*Margie R. Emmert*

Margie A. Emmermann  
Director  
Arizona Office of Tourism

## AOT News Flash

### New Research Updates on Azot.Gov!

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site [www.azot.gov](http://www.azot.gov).

- [Gross Sales and Tourism Taxes August 2008](#)
- [Lodging Performance September 2008 \(By County\)](#)
- [Lodging Performance September 2008](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at [bbillings@azot.gov](mailto:bbillings@azot.gov).

## Trippin' with AOT

### AAA FAM Tour

Kristy Swanson, Travel Industry Marketing Specialist, escorted eight AAA travel agents on a familiarization tour entitled "Canyons to Lakes of Arizona." Two of the agents were from Michigan, the rest of the group were from Arizona, Massachusetts, and Ohio. This very well-received familiarization tour made stops in Mesa, Cameron, Page, and the Grand Canyon National Park. The group enjoyed a boat ride down Canyon Lake aboard the Dolly Steamboat, a jeep tour along the Apache Trail, took in a show at the Broadway Palms Dinner Theater, a tour of Antelope Canyon and took a flight over the Grand Canyon National Park. If you'd like additional information, please contact Kristy Swanson at [kswanson@azot.gov](mailto:kswanson@azot.gov).

### Visit USA Consumer Shows, Germany

Between January and March 2009, AOT's German representative will attend three leading consumer shows which are being coordinated by the Visit USA Germany committee. There are two five-day shows being held in Munich and Hamburg, and one nine-day show in Stuttgart. An estimated 375,000 consumers will attend the shows, making this a great opportunity to reach a large and target audience.

Brochure participation is normally \$250 per show, but all three shows are available for \$500 (plus shipping). **Space is limited to five exhibitors on a first come first served basis!**

For more information, please contact Loretta Belonio at 602-364-3725 or via e-mail at [lbelonio@azot.gov](mailto:lbelonio@azot.gov).

## Industry News

### 2008 TIA Marketing Outlook Forum

Economic Outlook Challenges Travel Industry

Some 450 travel industry representatives gathered in Portland, Oregon, for the Travel Industry Association's 2008 Marketing Outlook Forum. It came at a time when the industry's outlook hasn't been this bleak since the 2001 terrorist attacks.

### **TIA Predicts Drop in Business, Leisure Travel in '09**

According to a new TIA national forecast, the recession that's battering the hospitality industry around the U.S. is likely to continue through 2009 and could worsen. TIA predicted that leisure travel will fall 1.3 percent nationally in 2009, and business travel will decline 2.7 percent. Travelers surveyed by TIA say they intend to cut spending on food, beverages, entertainment and souvenirs, and shorten lengths of stays, moves that would further reduce the amount of money visitors leave behind in top destinations such as Las Vegas and Orlando. Overseas travel--which excludes visitors from Canada and Mexico--is expected to slide 3 percent, according to TIA.

The trade group said it expects international traffic will finish 2008 up 9.1 percent from 2007. Domestic travel, by contrast, will end the year down 1 percent, followed by a 1.7 percent decline in 2009. Despite current economic conditions and lagging consumer confidence, TIA said the forecast shows that leisure travel volume remains stable for 2008, down just 0.2 percent and is expected to decline modestly in 2009, down 1.3 percent. The outlook for business travel remains more challenging, with a 3.7 percent decline in volume projected for 2008 and another 2.7 percent decline forecast for 2009, according to the TIA forecast.

### **Green Travel**

With sustainable tourism a growing concern in the travel industry, achieving solid social, financial and environmental results can be challenging, say the experts. "There needs to be more sharing of best practices," says Suzanne Cook, senior vice president of research for the Travel Industry Association. To that end, TIA and American Express have partnered on the "Sustainable Travel Initiative" that consolidates industry information and make resources available in a response to the need for sustainable travel.

*(Travel Advance and TIA)*

### **New Visa Waiver Rules Could Bring Surge in Tourism**

The addition of seven new countries to the U.S. Visa Waiver Program is expected to bolster the U.S. tourism industry, which relies increasingly on foreign visitors. As reported earlier (TA, 10/17), the federal government plans to add South Korea and six Eastern European countries to its list of nations whose citizens will be allowed to visit the U.S. without a visa. Recent promotional efforts are credited with helping to produce a 10 percent increase in the number of international visitors to the U.S. in 2007 over the previous year, growth that continued at least through the first half of 2008. But the volume of tourists from Europe, Asia and other destinations is still down since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Last year, 24 million overseas travelers visited the U.S., down from 26 million in 2000. ([www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business](http://www.LosAngelesTimes.com/Business))

### **Grand Canyon to Waive Fees for Veterans on Veterans Day**

On Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11, all military veterans and current members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families will be admitted to Grand Canyon National Park free of charge. Veterans Day is dedicated to those who've protected this nation and its people, both in years past and today.

In appreciation of their service and sacrifice, military personnel, both active and retired, and their families who visit Grand Canyon National Park on Veterans Day will have their entrance fee waived for the day. Free entry for active and retired military personnel will be available at both

the North and South Rims of the park. “User fees” such as backcountry permit fees, camping fees and fees for other activities offered in the park will not be waived.

For more information about the waiving of fees at Grand Canyon National Park on Veteran’s Day, call 928-638-7951 or 7954. For information on National Park Service (NPS) battlefields, military parks, and historic sites that commemorate the service of American veterans please visit the NPS web site at [www.nps.gov/pub\\_aff/veterans/honor.htm](http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/veterans/honor.htm). For information on visiting Grand Canyon National Park, please visit the park’s web site at [www.nps.gov/grca](http://www.nps.gov/grca), or call 928-638-7888.